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ABSTRACT

The text of a workshop lecture and demonstration focus on the use of instructional materials to enhance the communicative competence of students of English as a Second Language in China. The text of the presentation addresses, in question-and-answer form, seven issues: (1) the varied teaching techniques of teachers in different cultural contexts (in this case, Hungary and Japan); (2) why English should be taught for communication; (3) the nature of communication within and across cultures; (4) the primary goal in teaching students to communicate in English; (5) how teachers can emphasize certain skills to facilitate communication; (6) the kinds of materials useful in teaching communication in English; and (7) how non-native ESL teachers can design communicative language lessons. A lesson is then presented that has workshop participants act as ESL beginners. Materials and classroom procedures are suggested for a lesson on a visit to New York City and a reading lesson. A lesson plan for a workshop activity involving the participants as teachers is also included. Contains 14 references. (MSE)

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ED 431 319

TEACHING STUDENTS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH: CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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Workshop on
EFL Teaching Materials and Pedagogy
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TEACHING STUDENTS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH: CONSIDERATIONS FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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I am very happy to be invited to join this workshop on EFL Teaching Materials and Pedagogy. One reason I am happy is because I have the chance to talk with EFL teachers about a subject that I find to be very interesting, that of how English as a Foreign Language teachers can use materials and pedagogy to teach English in useful and creative ways.

There are many different ways to think about the use of materials and pedagogy to teach English. One way is to consider how materials and pedagogy can be used to teach students to use English for communicative purposes. As such, I have designed my lesson to include a morning lecture and a demonstration (with a little audience interaction to help me out!) on how EFL teachers in The People's Republic of China can use materials and pedagogy to teach students to communicate in English.

I want to point out that in the afternoon I would like to do a workshop I call "How communicative?" The point of the afternoon workshop is to evaluate how useful different EFL teaching materials are to teaching students to use English for communicative purposes. The afternoon workshop will require you to try out some of the materials. But, don't worry! I won't ask you to do anything too complex in English unless you want to!

With this introduction in mind, let's move on to my topic of how materials and pedagogy can be used to teach students to use English for communicative purposes.

Morning Lecture: Questions and Answers about Teaching Students to Communicate in English

Lecture and Demonstration (Time: 90-120 minutes)

I have had the pleasure of teaching many EFL teachers who are not native speakers of English. I taught EFL students and teachers in Thailand, Japan, Hungary, and for a short time, The People's Republic of China (at Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute). I have also taught EFL teachers who came to America to study – in New York City at Teachers College, Columbia University and for the past 14 years, in the MA TESOL program I direct at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

These nonnative EFL teachers have asked me the same questions over the years. In this talk I would like to raise these questions and answer them. With this in mind, let's begin. Here are some of the questions that EFL teachers have asked me over the years:

1. "How do some EFL teachers teach English?"

2. "Why should I teach students to communicate in English?"

3. "What is communication?"

4. "What is the main goal of teaching students to communicate in English?"

5. "What skills can teachers emphasize to facilitate communication in the classroom?"

6. "What kinds of materials are useful to teachers who want to teach students to communicate in English?"

7. "How can EFL teachers, who are non-native speaker of English, design communicative language lessons?"

Question One: "How do some EFL teachers teach English?"

I thought I would begin my set of questions and answers by providing examples of how two EFL teachers teach English. This first example is based on an observation of a teacher in Hungary. Although I realize that Chinese and Hungarian cultures are quite different, and that learners have different expectations and assumptions about what it means to learn a second language, I include it here because it so clearly illustrates how one teacher tried to engage students in developing communicative competency in the language.

The class I observed was taught at an Hungarian high school in a remote town in western Hungary. There were 34 students in the class, all seniors. Here is what I observed: The teacher put pictures on the wall of people using exaggerated gestures. She then pointed to a picture of a man with a wrinkled brow and wide eyes, his head titled, shrugging his shoulders. She asked, "How about this picture? What does this gesture possibly mean?" One student volunteered, "It mean, 'I don't know'?" The teacher accepted this and went on to the next picture. After the students gave their opinions, the teacher told the class they will spend the next few classes considering their own and others' nonverbal behaviors –such as eye contact, gestures, and the use of space – as well as different ways to express meaning in different cultures.

The teacher then had students select a piece of colored paper from a bowl, telling the students with the red piece to form a group in the back, those with blue to group to the right, purple to the left, and so on. After the students settled, she gave each group a set of statements about nonverbal behavior and asked them to decide if they are true or false. The students were silent at first as they studied such statements as this one: "People in Saudi Arabia stand much closer to each other than people in Hungary."

As they worked on this task. I was impressed because all the students were doing their best to speak to each other in English. They did use some Hungarian, but this was, as far as I could tell, only to get a translation of words or to find out how to say something in English. As the students worked on the task, the teacher circulated among the groups She answered their questions about the meaning of words, but she did not tell them the answers, even when they coaxed her. She did correct some of the students' language errors, though. The students wrote down the correction into a notebook.

The teacher then went through the list of statements. In the end, the students discovered that all the statements are true. One student whispered to her in jest, "You tricked us!"

As planned, the teacher then handed out a short article on nonverbal behavior. She told the students to read the first three paragraphs silently, after which she had a volunteer paraphrase the meaning. The article was about kinesics (the study of such things as gestures, eye contact, and posture). She then passed out five small gold stars to each student and told them to read the article twice, the second time pasting the stars next to ideas in the reading they find most interesting. She also asked them to put a mark next to any sentences that were difficult to comprehend. Finally, she told them that they can't use a dictionary and that they should try to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar words from the context. She pointed out that if they are stumped, they can call on her, as she jokingly calls herself, "a walking dictionary".

* * * * * *

This class I just described is quite a class! But, is it usual? In contrast, here is a more typical EFL classroom, this one from my observations in a high school in Japan. This example shows the efforts of a teacher who struggles to teach students English.

The class had 45 students. The chairs were lined in rows and students were dressed in uniforms. The teacher introduced the lesson in English. She then repeated what she said in Japanese. I wondered if the students listened to the English, knowing that she would repeat her instructions in Japanese. "What a lost opportunity to learn to comprehend English", I thought. "I wonder why she doesn't keep working at giving instructions in English.". She told the class that they would be studying the present perfect tense to talk about experience. The teacher then asked the students to open their text books to page 32. The teacher read a story from the text aloud. She stopped after reading each sentence to translate it into English. After she read and translated the first two paragraphs, she asked volunteer students to read aloud. She also asked volunteers to translate, but no student was willing to do this. So, the teacher translated. At the end of this reading activity, the teacher wrote three sentences from the reading passage on the board. Each of the sentences were in the present perfect tense and were about experience. Here's are the sentences: "Amy has visited London. Have you ever been abroad? Her friend has flown to England many times". The teacher explained the grammatical structure and meaning in Japanese.

Then teacher then had the students work through a grammar exercise in the text. The students took turns reading sentences and filling the blanks with the correct form of tense for each verb. For example: Have you ever _____ lamb? (to eat). This was followed by a practice dialogue in the text. The teacher asked the students to pair up and to practice the open dialogues:

A: Have you ever been to the sea?
B: _____
How about you? Have you ever been to the mountains?
A: _____

I noticed that students used full sentences, for example, by answering, "Yes, I have been to the sea." I couldn't help thinking that this isn't they way that people actually talk. I would simply respond, "Yes. I have."

The teacher then asked the students to close their books, and she went around the room asking students questions: "Have you ever studied English?" "Have you ever seen the sun set?" I couldn't help thinking that this teacher's questions aren't real. I knew that she was focused on form rather than on meaning. I kept thinking, I wonder what would happen if the teacher asked the students real questions, for example, "Have you every thought about going to America?" or "Have you ever met someone from another country?" Of course, I remembered, I have observed other teachers asking students real questions. I wonder why this teacher doesn't see the usefulness of doing this!

* * * * * *

Which of these classes do you think teaches students to be competent in English? Which do you think builds students ability to comprehend written and spoken English and to be able to express themselves in English? Likely you said the first class. And, I agree.

But, my observations of many different EFL classes in Asia has shown me that many teachers approach teaching like the Japanese teacher. I think of this kind of class as a traditional one that does not focus on teaching students how to comprehend and communicate in English. Rather, it teaches them <u>about</u> English.

The point of my talk today is to consider how we can teach English so that students have opportunities to become competent in spoken and written English. But, before we move on to my ideas about teaching EFL students, I would like to ask you, "Why should we teach students to use English for communication?" I also think it will be useful to consider what communication is.

Question Two: "Why should I teach students to use English for communication?"

Here are some of the things that nonnative EFL teachers have said to me about why they don't want to teach students to communicate in English:

- "I am not a native speaker of English. My English isn't good enough to communicate with my students. What if I make errors? What if the students realize my spoken English isn't so good? It might embarrass the students and me."

- "I let the foreign native speakers, the British, Australian, or American teachers, teach students to communicate in English. That's their job."

- "I'm best at teaching grammar and translation. This is what I can teach. I'm not trained to teach communication."

- "Our job is to prepare students for exams. We don't have time to teach students to communicate in English."

- "I want to teach students to communicate in English, but I'm not sure how to go about doing this. I only know how to use the text book. How can I possibly change the way I teach?"

These remarks are quite important. The teachers who made these comments have very genuine concerns. And, in some cases, they are correct. For example, quite often the job description is to prepare students for grammar or translation exams, and teaching students to communicate in English seems quite distant from this reality. Also, some teachers are not confident with their English and believe they might lose face if they miss-communicate with students. It is also true that some teachers want to teach students to communicate in English, but do not know to do this. I also think that most EFL teachers don't really know what teaching students to communicate in English includes. And, this is part of my goal today, to inform and get you to think about what communication is and why it is important to do our best to teach students to be able to communicate in English.

Basically, I don't accept the idea that nonnative English speakers can't teach students in their classes how to communicate in English. As many of you likely already know, and as the example of the Hungarian EFL teacher I gave earlier shows, teaching students how to communicate in English is something that can be done by nonnative English teachers.

And, there are some strong reasons why at least some nonnative EFL teachers should provide chances for students to learn to communicate – in their reading classes, writing classes, even translation classes. And, some EFL teachers agree with me. Here are some of the comments given by other nonnative EFL teachers:

- "Most students, even those at a young age, recognize the importance of learning to communicate in English. They want to learn to communicate in English. Although my English isn't perfect, I think it is my job to teach them to communicate in English." (Comment by a Thai EFL teacher)

- "The world is getting smaller. Being able to communicate in English, among other languages, including Chinese, is an advantage. English, for example, can be used in the doing international business, using modern technology such as the internet, and travel. The future might be brighter for those who can communicate in several languages, including English." (Comment by a Chinese EFL teacher)

- "I believe that By placing some emphasis on developing communication skills, teachers build students' overall abilities with English. Students will gain in their ability to read, write, and understand English. This could influence their ability to do well on some exams, such as TOEFL." (Comment made by a Turkish EFL teacher)

- "My English grammar, not so good. But, I want students to see that I am not afraid to use my English. I want students to feel, how I say, free to express themselves in English. If I teach only about English, how can they do that?" (Comment made by an Italian EFL teacher)

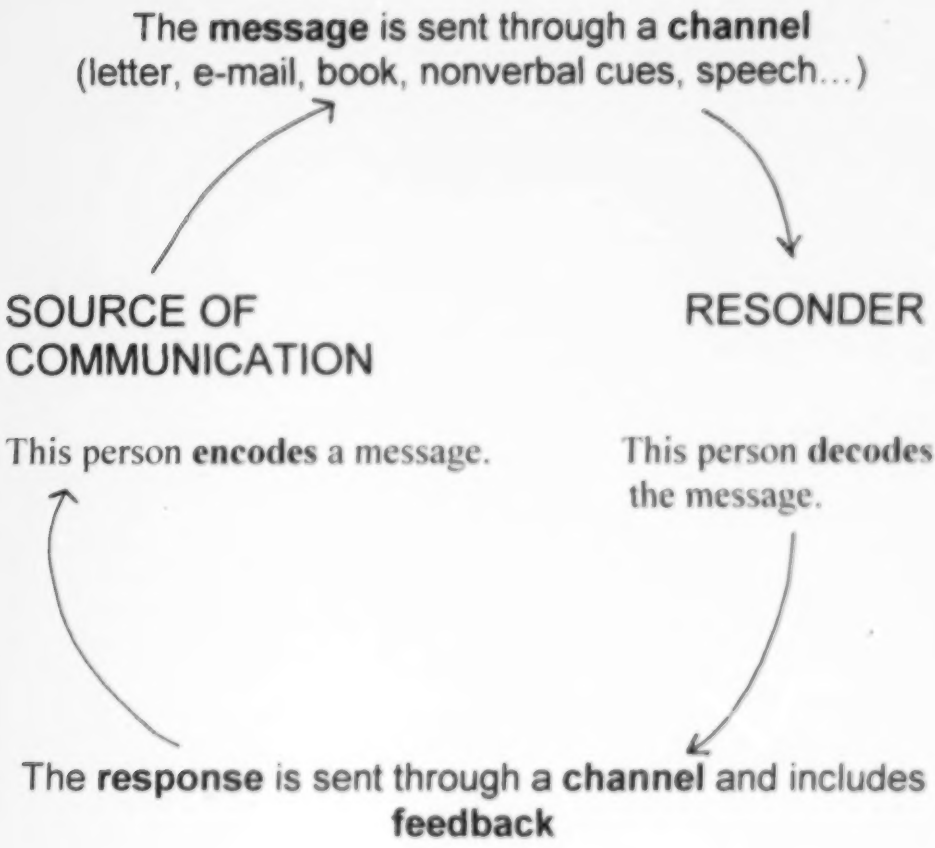
- "I teach in a Japanese high school. Students expect me to prepare them for university examination. It is very important to them. And, I do this. My students are very successful. But, I also use English with them when we study in class. They speak English. Me, too. We communicate in English and use the grammar we study. I think this is one reason they can pass they exam. " (Comment by a Japanese high school teacher)

- "The number of people who use English as a global language is growing. As David Crystal points out in his book *English as a Global Language*, 'nearly a quarter of the world's population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing -- in the late 1990's that means between 1.2 and 1.5 billion people' (pp. 4-5). It is my belief to become *fluent* and *competent* learners need to learn to use English as a means to communicate." (Comment made by me).

Question Three: "What is communication?"

Let's turn now to defining what communication is. Here is a figure to facilitate our understanding:[1]

[1] This model for understanding communication comes from Samovar and Porter (1998)


The **message** is sent through a **channel**
(letter, e-mail, book, nonverbal cues, speech…)
SOURCE OF COMMUNICATION
RESONDER
This person **encodes** a message.
This person **decodes** the message.
The **response** is sent through a **channel** and includes **feedback**

As you can see, communication begins with a *behavioral source*. This person has both a social need to share information with others, or to influence the attitudes and behaviors of others. The source's wish to communicate indicates a desire to share his or her internal state of being with another human being.

A second ingredient of communication is *encoding*. Encoding is an internal activity in which verbal and nonverbal behaviors are selected. It's what goes on inside of us to create meaning.

A third ingredient of communication is *a message*. A message is a set of verbal and/or nonverbal symbols that represent what a person wants to say. It is putting the encoding into an expression of meaning.

A fourth ingredient of communication, as the figure shows, is a *channel*. A channel is the physical means by which a message moves between people. For example, a channel can be sounds (words, sentences) going through the air. Or it can be visual, for example, a television. Or, it could be a radio, loud speaker, telephone, and so on.

A fifth ingredient of communication is the *responder*. A responder observes or takes in a source's verbal and/or nonverbal behavior and considers the meaning of the message.

When the responder considers the meaning, he or she is *decoding* the message. This is a sixth ingredient of communication, *decoding*. Decoding is like encoding because it is an internal activity. It happens inside of us. But, it is the opposite of encoding. It not creating meaning, but trying to understand the meaning created by others.

A seventh ingredient is a *response*. A response is what a person decides to do about a message. The person can do nothing as a response, respond nonverbally (for example, shake his or her head 'no') or respond verbally (and nonverbally).

The final ingredient of communication is feedback. Feedback is information available to a source that permits him or her to make judgments about communication effectiveness. Through feedback, the person can adjust his or her verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

* * * * *

Let's take this model a step further by considering communication across cultures. When we communicate with people from our own cultural backgrounds, we use certain expected behaviors, for example nonverbal behaviors. At an obvious level, as an American I shake hands with another American when I first meet him or her in a formal situation. Germans also shake hands, but the way of shaking hands is quite different. The arm is pumped up and down and the hand is held very tightly. A tight firm handshake shows strength of character and respect. Unlike Americans and Germans, Japanese bow. The person who bows the deepest is showing that he or she acknowledges the other person has a higher status. This deeper bow shows respect. In Thailand, Thais *wai* (putting hands together in a prayer like fashion). If one person wants to show respect, her or she holds the hands higher during the *wai*. What do you do in The People's Republic of China when you meet someone?

But what happens when we cross cultures? Even if we use English, we still need to decide what behaviors to use. When a person from one culture uses a language, such as English, to communicate with people from another culture, decisions have to be made about how to communicate. And, this can become very complex! What if you, from a Chinese culture, visit Japan, and you use English to communicate with someone who is from this Japanese culture. As the source of communication, when you greet the Japanese person, do you bow? Shake hands? Do you use English with Japanese cultural behaviors? I imagine that you would use Japanese cultural behaviors. But, what if you discover that the person you are meeting had lived in China. What do you do then?

Deciding what behaviors to use is more complex then just meeting someone and knowing whether to bow, shake hands, or wai. If we look at *kinesics* across cultures, we can understand that we need to learn to adjust other nonverbal behaviors during our communications with people from other cultures. Take *gestures* for example. How do you call someone to come to you from across the room?(Imagine that you are in a place where you can't talk loudly, like a library, and you want to call your friend over to you.) Most mainstream

Americans would put their hand out, palm up, and move their hand inward, doing this a few times. But, in Thailand, this would be quite rude! Why? Because this is the way Thais call animals. They gesture people to come to them with the palm up, moving the fingers back and forth toward themselves.

It is not possible to go into great detail about kinesics now, as this topic is quite complex. But, I can say that when we communicate with people from other cultures we need to consider lots of different nonverbal behaviors, including the way we walk, stand, sit, touch, smile, use our eyes, point, and more. We can also consider our use of space or *proxemics*. For example, people from some cultures (for instance, Saudi Arabians) stand or sit much closer than people from other cultures (for instance, American, Chinese and Japanese). But, again, this is complex. For example, I've been on a Chinese bus! The rules for how close you get to other people instantly changes!

Another area of knowledge that is useful to us when we think about communicating across cultures is sociolinguistic behavior. There are rules for the way people in a culture are expected to socialize, including the way we greet, make promises, approve, disapprove, show regret, apologize, request, complain, give gifts, compliment, invite, refuse an invitation, offer, thank, say goodbye on the phone and more. And, not behaving correctly in a social situation can greatly effect communication, especially when the other person is not aware of the other's cultural ways of behaving.

Please allow me to give a personal example. In 1988 I came to China as an exchange professor at Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute. A few weeks after arriving, I talked on the telephone with one of the students in my class. He called to tell me that he was able to make copies of an article I gave him for students in the class to share. After the business about the copies was finished, I continued to talk, mostly about personal things. I began to ask him if he had a good weekend, when all of a sudden, I heard the phone click. He had hung up the phone while I was in mid-sentence. I was amazed! At first I thought he was rude. But, after this happened on the phone a few times with him and others, I came to realize that this is simply acceptable behavior. Unlike in my American culture, where we might talk about person things, for example, asking how the other person's family members or whether or not the person went to a baseball game, I discovered, at least in 1988, that this was not a part of the way of ending phone conversations in Beijing. The business is done. It's time to say "Zaijian"! Am I right?

Another example is the way people compliment across cultures. North Americans tend to compliment each other often. We compliment a person's new haircut, clothing, work, home, children, cooking, garden, choice of wine, grades in school – almost anything! In other cultures, people do not compliment each other as often, and the way the compliment is given is often different. In Japan, for example, a compliment will be slightly indirect, as was one I recently heard: "Your house is very big! It must be expensive!" And, the way people react to compliments can also be different. Most North Americans will accept a compliment at face value, while Japanese and Chinese will often react with modesty. For example, an American hostess's typical reaction to the compliment,

"This fee is delicious!" would be "Thank you! I'm happy you like it." However, a Japanese hostess might react with something like "Sono koto nai desho" (That's not so.)

Gift giving, too, can be quite different. In many countries, a person visiting a friend on a special occasion will take a gift. In America the hostess will open the gift and thank the person. However, in China, I believe (please tell me if I'm wrong!), and in Thailand, most people would set the gift aside, not opening it in front of the guest. This is because the host does not want the guest to feel obliged to give a gift and does not want to hurt the guest's feelings if he or she does not like the gift and his or her true feelings are obvious.

I could give many other examples concerning social behaviors across cultures. But, our time is limited, and I hope I made my point. Communication across cultures is difficult, and using English words and syntax is only a small part of communicating. We also need to be aware of and negotiate the appropriate use of nonverbal and social behaviors.[2]

. . . . .

We can also expand on the basic model of communication I presented earlier by considering characteristics of communication. Here are some of the basic *characteristics of communication*:[3]

1. **Communication includes a real purpose**. Normally, when people communicate with each other, there is a reason. This means that there is information that one person has and that another person needs. This is called an "information gap".

2. **Communication includes choice**. This means that the participants in a conversation have a choice, both in terms of what they will say and how they will say it.

3. **Communication includes a real desire to express meaning**. This means that the participants in a conversation express themselves freely without feeling forced to communicate.

4. **Communication is usually focused on content, not form**. Participants in a normal conversation usually concentrate on what they say, not how they are saying it (e.g., the grammatical rule).

5. **Communication usually includes clarification and confirmation**. This means that participants in a conversation have chances to ask for

[2] I talk more about nonverbal and sociolinguistic behaviors across cultures in my book, *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language: A Teacher Self-development and Methodology Guide* (Gebhard, 1996).

[3] My ideas here have come from synthesizing knowledge from reading Ellis (1986), Johnson and Morrow (1981), Larsen-Freeman (1986), Long and Sato (1987), and Samovar and Porter (1998).

clarification and to clarify (or make clear) meaning, as well as to confirm (or verify) their understanding.

These five characteristics are central to the design of activities that promote communication in the classroom. I talk more about these characteristics later, especially in the afternoon workshop. Here I will only point out that when we teach students to communicate in English, we don't necessarily follow the normal rules for communicating. For example, and related to point four, that communication is usually focused on content not form, when we teach students to communicate in English as their foreign language, we can teach them to mix form with content. We do this in creative ways, and I will discuss how we can do this in my talk about and demonstration with "pre-communication" and "communication" tasks a little later. It is worth pointing out that mixing form and content is unlike learning to communicate in our native language in which we center on content most of the time. It isn't until we learn literature, writing, and language awareness that we pay attention to form and content at the same time.

Question Four: "What is the main goal of teaching students to communicate in English?"

Let's now switch to teaching. And, let's begin by considering the main goal of teaching students to communicate in English, that of competency.

I see communicative competence in much the way as scholars such Dell Hymes (1972) sees it, that of the ability to use language, including reading and writing, within social contexts. I also believe that there are three types of competence, as Canale and Swain (1980) discuss. These include the following:

1. **Grammatical competence**: knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.

2. **Sociolinguistic competence**: sociocultural rules of use language in social contexts. For example, knowing how to give a gift using the appropriate cultural behaviors or knowing how to give and accept compliments based on the rules of the culture. Quite often sociocultural rules are connected to the functions of language (i.e., apologizing, requesting, asking permission).

3. **Discourse competence**: combination of grammatical forms and meanings for meaningful and appropriate context in both spoken and written language. For example, knowing when to laugh during a joke; knowing how and when to ask a question during a conversation; knowing how to organize ideas in an argumentative academic essay.

4. **Strategic competence**: verbal and non-verbal communication strategies for dealing with potential breakdowns in communications. For example, knowing how to explain directions by drawing a map; knowing how to ask someone to

repeat what they said or show them you don't understand; being able to guess the meaning of words (in print or spoken) from the context; knowing how to write down thoughts in a note when verbal communications fail.

In my mind, the goal of teaching students to communicate in English is to provide them with knowledge about and experience with developing their grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. It is through developing such competence that a language learner can make true progress in the language.

My observations show me that most effort in EFL classrooms is on developing students grammatical competence. Much less emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for students to develop their sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. The question I ask is, can we better educate EFL students by teaching them so that they build all four areas of competence? Or, am I asking too much?

Question Five: "What skills can teachers emphasize to facilitate communication in the classroom?"

If the goal is teach students to be competent in English, I see a need for teachers to emphasize all four language skills. This happens most frequently in speaking classes. Students quite often have to read and sometimes write during a speaking activity. For some reason, teachers often think that reading and writing will help students learn to speak. But, what about reading classes? My observations of many reading classes taught by EFL teachers in different Asian countries shows me that most teachers believe that students need to read, translate, study grammar, and answer comprehension questions to learn to read. I now ask, won't writing help students gain competency as readers? Won't speaking provide chances for competency? Later I give an example of a reading lesson I title "Kiku the Cat" in which students are asked to listen to the teacher talk about the cat, comprehend and answer spoken questions about their lives, answer questions in writing, put a set of photographs in the right order based on the story line, and verbally summarize the story they read while following the set of photos. I believe, as do many other language teachers and teacher educators, that teaching students to become competent readers requires the students to engage in other skills besides reading, especially talking and writing about the reading they have done.

In the next part of my talk, and later in my demonstration, I show how other teachers were able to combine skills in creative ways, all aimed at not only developing students skills as readers or writers, but also as being able to communicate their ideas competently through the use of other skills, such as speaking and listening.

Question Six: "What kinds of materials are useful to teachers who want to teach students to communicate in English?"

I include this question for two reasons. First, teachers quite often find themselves so closely bound by the textbook that they don't think about how useful other materials can be. And, second, I want to point out that students need exposure to lots and lots of authentic materials. Real communication in English takes place around very real materials. To make my point, I want to ask you what you read in China? What are some of the things you read in Chinese? Stop for a moment and jot down as many things as you can think of.

It really is amazing how many things we read in a day, isn't it! To further make my point, I asked Americans to tell me some of the things they read. I made the following list . As you listen to my list, think about how you could use these items in an English lesson.

Things We Read in America

Calendars, addresses on envelopes, numbers and addresses in telephone books, name cards, bank statements, credit cards, maps, diplomas, product warning labels, washing instruction labels, shoes size labels, shopping ads, coupons, money, food product nutrition labels, cereal boxes, messages on coffee cups, graffiti on walls, children's scribbling, letters from friends, business letters, electronic mail, junk mail, postcards, greeting cards, comic books, newspaper columns, magazine articles, advertisements, posters, travel guides, cookbooks, repair manuals, product instruction manuals, notes from mothers, memos, train, bus, and air schedules, place mats in fast-food restaurants, street signs, textbooks, overhead projector notes, syllabi, journal articles, short stories, novels, plays, poems, theater, gallery, and museum programs, store catalogs, song lyrics, film subtitles, subway ads, ads in taxi cabs, job application forms, name tags, names of banks, restaurants shops, and stores, pins, T0shirt messages, messages written by airplanes in the sky.

In addition to authentic reading materials, things without words can be useful. For example, I sometimes do a writing activity using everyday objects. I put things in a bag, such as a set of car keys, a rubber ball, a foreign coin, a plastic flower, a candle, a calculator, a small wood box, and so on. Students pull an object from the bag and are asked to write a story that centers on this object. I've also used authentic materials during role play activities. For example, when teaching students how to order food in an American restaurant, I do a role play in which students take on different roles – the waiter, a customer, the manager, and so on. I have students pretend they are in a restaurant, and to help them create the setting, I provide silverware, napkins, plates, even plastic food. Such items add to the authenticity of the role play. I like to think that the students gain

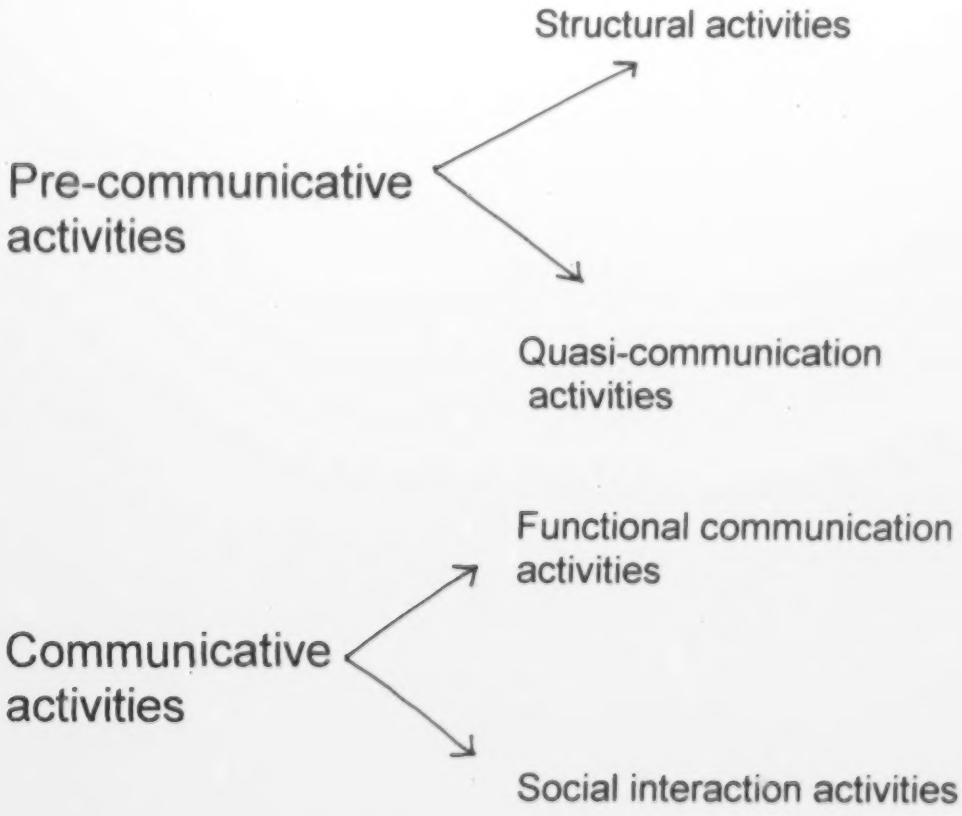
something extra from the realia that makes the language learning experience more interesting and communicative.

In the next section, when I discuss how teachers can provide opportunities for students to communicate in English, I provide another example of how authentic materials can be used through an activity called "Visit a City".

Question Seven: "How can EFL teachers, who are non-native speakers of English, design communicative language lessons?"

I raise this question because I have heard many non-native speakers of English say, "I'm not sure about how I can teach students how to communicate". Such teachers, I believe, might not feel secure enough to emphasize communication. Here I would like to show those teachers who are interested in how it is possible to design language lessons that provide chances for students to learn to use English as a means of communication.

When I design a lesson for EFL students, I like to use a design I discovered when reading the work of Littlewood (1981). He introduced me to the idea of pre-communicative and communicative activities. Here's a visual of his way of teaching:



As Littlewood writes, "In pre-communicative activities, the teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or skill which compose communicative ability, and provides the learners with opportunities to practise them separately" (1981:85). The aim is for learners to practice using language they will need when actually communicating. I think of this as having students work on their *grammatical competency* and being introduced to *sociolinguistic* and *discourse* features that can lead to competency in these areas.

There are two types of *Pre-communicative activities*. The first type include *structural activities*. These are much like some of the grammar exercises that EFL teachers teach already, such as teaching a beginner how to turn a simple sentence, such as "I like to eat dumplings." Into a question, "Do you like to eat dumplings?" The kind of activities might even follow an Audiolingual way of teaching, having students do substitution drills, transformation drills, repeat drills, and so on. Writing exercises can also be done, providing more and more practice with the structure of language.

Quasi-communication activities are intended to help learners relate the structures they are studying to the use of language. Some quasi-communicative activities include: (1) situation dialogues (2) open-ended dialogues, (3) timetable, map, consumer's comparison chart or price list, and so on.

Please allow me to demonstrate structural and quasi-communication activities by doing an activity with you. Please pretend that you are beginners in an EFL class.

Lesson Plan for an Activity on Accepting and Refusing Food

Level: Beginner, first year.

Procedures:

1. Put pictures of food items on the wall or overhead. Use overlay with the each food item name. (or write name of food item under the picture)

2. Ask students to draw each item on a separate note card. Ask the students to copy the name of the food item on separate smaller piece of note card. Have the students match the food item and name.

3. Have the students turn over the drawings and labels. Ask them to mix them up and to play a matching game. They line up the drawings, face down. They do the same for the labeled names of each food item. The student turns over a food item drawing. Then, the student turns over a name. Do they match? (This can be done individually or as a game/context with teams of students).

4. Review the structure for count and non-count nouns. Also review the structure for offering something (Would you like....?)

Would you like some cake?
coffee?
tea?
rice?
pie?

Would you like an apple?
a banana?
a piece of pie?

5. The teacher holds up or points to a food item and asks: "Would you like some cake?" The students shout out, "Yes" or "No". Then, the teacher holds up or points to a food item and asks individual students.

6. The teacher then hands out a dialogue that combines grammatical and vocabulary items and adds a little new language:

A: Do you like cake?
B: Yes, I do.
A: Would you like a piece of cake?
B: Yes. Thank you.
A: How about something to drink? Do you like hot tea?
B: Yes. Sometimes.
A: Would you like some tea?
B: No thank you.

The teacher reads the dialogue out loud, has the students repeat if after her, and has the students practice it in pairs.

7. The teacher then gives out a handout. The teacher then instructs the students to put a check mark (✓) next to any item the student likes and an X next to any item the student doesn't like.

Directions: Put a mark next to each item if you like it. Put an X next to an item if you don't like it.

Item:	Like/dislike
1. apples	
2. bananas	
3. fish	
4. vanilla ice cream	
5. chicken ice cream	
6. apple pie	
7. fried rice	

8. Next, the teacher asks students to pair up. One student offers each item from the list on the handout. The partner accepts or refuses the item. The teacher can encourage the student to go beyond the list of food items by adding his or her own. (Some students have lots of fun with this, for example, by making up comical food items, like "chicken ice cream" or "salt pie".

* * * * * *

Communicative activities. follow the pre-communicative activities, and as the figure shows, there are two types. The first type of activity Littlewood labels *functional communication activities*. His purpose is to provide a chance for learners to "use the language they know in order to get meanings across as effectively as possible. Success is measured primarily according to whether they cope with the communicative demands of the immediate situation" (1981: 20). In these activities learners have to solve a problem, seek information to fill a gap, and make decisions about what is appropriate to say and do.

Even with beginners with limited English it is possible to do communicative activities. For example, with the activity for beginners I just did with you, it is possible to have the students put the handout away and to ask them about what they like or dislike and whether you would like some or not. Here's a sample conversation that might take place:

Teacher: Holly, do you like fruit?
Holly: Yes. I like apples.
Teacher: I have an apple in my bag (points to bag). Would you like one?
Holly. No thank you.

If it is appropriate, the teacher could actually bring something for the students. For example, the teacher could bring different flavored candy, then ask each student if he or she would like some. The students could go around the classroom asking each other, too: "Would you like a piece of candy?" The idea is to make the communication real, not just a language exercise.

For more advanced learners, there are a variety of language activities that students can do which focus on communication and all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. One of these advanced activities is "Discover a City". I found this activity by reading "Motivating language learners through authentic materials" written by Bernice Melvin and David Stout (1987). They ask the students to imagine they will visit a city, for example New York City or Washington, DC) and they need to plan the visit. To do this the teacher needs to have a variety of authentic materials. Here is a list:

Materials for Visit a City Activity

City street map; public transportation guide; relief map of the city and surrounding countryside; list of hotels and information about them; guide to the city's restaurants with descriptions and rankings; menus from local restaurants; tourist brochures; cultural publications announcing opening times of museums, theaters, and galleries in the city; catalogues from exhibitions at local museums; entertainment section of local papers; student guides to the city with information on educational institutions; guide to sports and recreation opportunities; movie listings; shopping guides and sales advertising; business telephone listings (like the Yellow Pages); samples of currency; magazine or newspaper articles describing various aspects of life in the city; songs about the city; films, television shows, or literature about or set in the city; pictures or videotapes of the city's best-known points of interest; audio or video interviews with natives and other visitors getting advice on what to see and do; radio and television ads for points of interest in the city; information about safety; information about the Chinese embassy and/or consultants; information about Chinese history in the city and points of interest related to China.

What kind of meaningful activities might students be asked to do with such materials? Let's consider how authentic materials about New York City could be used here in China:

1. Ask students to pick a time of year to visit New York. For example, during the summer, fall, winter, or spring.

2. Ask students to join a planning committee. Here are some possible committees:
   - Lodging
   - Eating in New York City
   - Museums in New York City
   - Transportation and getting around the city
   - Movies, theater, concerts, zoos, and other entertainment
   - Seasonal dress and activities in the city
   - Shopping in the city
   - Safety in the city

3. Each committee studies the materials related to the committee. If the internet is available, students can also go beyond the "paper" literature made available by the teacher by studying web sites.

4. Each committee is responsible to give an oral report to classmates about their topic as it relates to the trip.

5. The teacher then sets a budget – how much money the class gets to take the trip, including money for entertainment, lodging, food, and personal expenses.

6. Students join one of these groups to plan the trip. Based on this information, each group is responsible for a certain aspect of the trip, for example, lodging for five nights or entertainment for five days.

7. Each group writes a written report for the class to read. Based on the report, a whole class trip agenda is created.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could actually plan a real trip with the students! We can dream anyway!

Besides, Discover a City, there are other activities that provide learners who are beyond beginning levels of learning English with chances to gain communication skills in English. Most are not as extensive as Discover a City, but can be quite interesting and useful to the students. And, I will give you a chance to experience some of these activities this afternoon during the workshop.

* * * * * *

To conclude this talk, I would like to do one more activity. This activity is called "Kiku the Cat"[4] and shows how pre-communicative and communicative activities can be a part of a reading lesson for intermediate students. Here's the lesson plan:

Kiku the Cat

Lesson Objectives

1. To teach students to read for meaning.
2. To show students the importance of reading a passage more than once while doing different kinds of reading tasks.

Lesson Materials

1. A set of photos which are used to create a story and later for students to recreate the story. (See Procedures)

2. A teacher composed story based on a set of photographs:

My wife, Yoko, and I got up very early on Saturday. We had a busy day ahead of us. Before leaving the house, we shut the windows. Then, we noticed

[4] A version of Kiku the Cat and accompanying activities can be found in Gebhard (1996).

our cat, Kiku, sitting comfortably on a chair. "This won't do," Yoko said. "We better put Kiku outside for the day."

Yoko said goodbye to Kiku just before she got into the car. The cat didn't look happy. He wanted to go back into the house to rest comfortably on the chair! But, this was impossible. At least, this is what we thought!

We then drove to my mother's place, a retirement home. But, my mother wasn't home. So we walked in the garden. Yoko spent some time at the small white fountain in the middle of the garden.

After we walked in the garden, we drove to the countryside to join relatives at a family reunion. Yoko talked with Aunt Nita and my cousin Ann for a long time. She also talked with Uncle Gene, who always seems to be wearing white slacks and shoes. We left the reunion early to go to a wedding party. Our friend Agnes is from Poland, and she married her childhood sweetheart Wojtek. They had a wonderful time, although they missed their families in Poland on such an important day.

Finally, late at night, we went home. And guess what! We found Kiku inside the house! He was standing in the hallway. How did that cat do that!?

Procedures:

1. *A pre-reading activity*: Before giving out the story, ask the students these questions – How many of you have ever had a pet cat? What do cats like to do?

2. *A pre-reading activity*. Don't give the story to the students yet. Read the story to the students as if telling the story. Then, ask the students:

- Who are the three main characters in the story (Kiku the cat, Yoko, and the story telling, Yoko's husband)
- "What is the name of the cat?" "Does anyone know what the cat's name means" (Kiku means *chrysanthemum*, a big white flower. Kiku is also a short nickname for *Kikunotsuke*, a famous Japanese kabuki actor.)

3. *A reading activity*. Hand out the story. Ask students to read silently as they do the following task:

- *Underline words you don't 100% understand in the story.*

Then, ask students what words they want to know more about. Write these words on the board. Talk about the meaning of the words.

4. *A reading activity*. Ask students to read the story again. This time have them do this task:

- Underline all the past tense verbs in the story.

- Then, go over the verbs. Have students tell you how many there are. (There are 23 of them). Write them on the board as students tell you them.

5. *A reading task:* Have students read the story again as the write down answers to the following true-false questions:

- Kiku is a dog. (False)
- Yoko and her husband visited three places. (True)
- Yoko and her husband visited his mother after going to a picnic. (False).
- Kiku is inside the house in his favorite chair at the start of the story. (True).
- Kiku is outside the house when Yoko and her husband leave. (True)
- Kiku is outside the house when Yoko and Her husband return late at night. (False)

6. *A reading comprehension task*: Have students form groups with five students in each group. Handout copies of a set of photos. Ask the students to put the set of photos in the order of the story.

7. *A post-reading task*: Ask for volunteer students to tell the story (not read it) by following the photographs.

8. *A post-reading task*: Ask the class the following questions –

- How did Kiku get back in the house?
- The title of the story is "Kiku the Cat". What other title can you give the story?

An Additional Thought: Awareness and Teaching

The ideas about communication presented here, especially on how English can be taught so that students learn how to use English as a means of communication, are not meant to be prescriptions about how teaching should be done. Rather, the teaching ideas and activities are meant to provide suggestions and illustrations of what is possible. As teachers, you need to take on the responsibility for what goes on in your classrooms.

As such, as a closing suggestion, I encourage you to learn more about the concept of communication and how you can provide chances for students in your classes to learn to communicate in English. This includes learning to communicate as a writer, listener, reader, and speaker of English.

I also encourage you to gain more and more awareness as to how you can gain awareness of what goes on in your classroom. If you believe you already teach students to communicate, investigate it. Are they communicating? Or does it just appear that they are? Likewise, if you don't really know if students are communicating in English, explore what they are actually doing with English. Take time to understand what you and students actually do. Then, explore ways to add communication, little by little, to your classroom lessons.

If you are interested in learning about how to explore, I suggest you study the work of John Fanselow (1987, 1988) and a book I just co-authored with Robert Oprandy (1999) titled *Language Teaching Awareness: A Guide to Exploring Beliefs and Practices* (Cambridge University Press). Through out work you can learn to gain awareness of teaching by systematically observing your own teaching, observing other teacher's teaching, by doing action research, by keeping a reflective teaching journal, and by talking in nonjudgmental ways about teaching with others.

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Afternoon Workshop: *How Communicative?*

Lesson Plan

Workshop: (Time: 120-150 minutes)[1]

Room Set Up: Need room in which the chairs can be moved to form small groups, move around and do role play activities.

Introduction: "This workshop will require you, the participants in this workshop, to interact with each other and me. However, I will not expect the participants to do very complex things with English. Rather, I will ask you to try out some of the activities that you teachers use to get EFL students to communicate in English. These activities will include reading, writing, listening and speaking. But, I think most of you will feel quite comfortable doing the activities."

Procedures:

1. Hand out the sheet on *Criteria for Evaluating How Communicative* (attached).

2. Review the characteristics of communication presented in the morning session on this handout. (Use an overhead, too)

3. Do each activity, one at a time. Some activities will take longer than others. There are a total of 7activities, including:

   - An open-ended dialogue
   - A strip story
   - A buzz group activity called "The best teacher I ever had"
   - An overhead projector activity on asking questions
   - A role play activity using role play cards (At a restaurant)
   - A skit using a script ("There's a fly in my soup!")
   - A grammar game (Snap/tag questions)

   After experiencing each activity, the workshop participants complete the evaluation sheet by putting a check mark next to the characteristic of communication that they believe was included as a part of the activity.

4. Ask each participant to decide which activity was the most communicative, and which was the least communicative.

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[1] This workshop is adapted from Ellis (1986). Ideas are also from Canale and Swain (1980), Fanselow (1987), Johnson and Morrow (1986), and Long and Sato (1983). See the bibliography attached to the morning lecture and discussion part of the workshop.

5. After all the participants have completed the evaluation sheet, have them form small groups. Ask them to decide which activity was the most communicative and which was the least communicative for them. Ask a representative from their group to explain "why".

6. Come together as a whole class. Have each group report which activity they thought were the most communicative and the least communicative. I then lead a discussion on this (if possible).

7. Talk about teaching students to communicate in English and how these kinds of activities can give them chances to do this. Point out again that communication requires reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Criteria for Evaluating How Communicative Activities Are

1. **Communication includes a real purpose**. Normally, when people communicate with each other, there is a reason. This means that there is information that one person has and that another person needs. This is called an "information gap".

2. **Communication includes choice**. This means that the participants in a conversation have a choice, in terms of what they say and how they say it.

3. **Communication includes a real desire to express meaning**. This means that the participants in a conversation express themselves freely without feeling forced to communicate.

4. **Communication is usually focused on content, not form**. Participants in a normal conversation usually concentrate on what they say, not how they are saying it (e.g., the grammatical rule).

5. **Communication usually includes clarification and confirmation**. This means that participants in a conversation have chances to ask for clarification and to clarify (or make clear) meaning, as well as to confirm (or verify) their understanding.

Directions: We will do eight activities. After experiencing an activity, write in a plus mark (+) if you think the activity *fully* meets each of the criteria listed. Put a check (✓) if you think the activity at *generally* meets Put an X if you think the activity *does not* meet the criteria.

Criteria	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7
Communication includes a real purpose							
Communication includes choice							
Communication includes a real desire to express meaning							
Communication is usually focused on content, not form							
Communication usually includes clarification and confirmation							